

it, Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) has announced that it will shift from offering two traditional Medicare plans to offering one traditional Medicare plan and one Medicare Advantage plan. I am concerned about this choice and would like to hear from you about it.

I know you all have been waiting for the opportunity to ask questions and share your comments, so let's transition to that right now.

IN MEMORY OF EARL PATY, JR.

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of my dear friend Earl Paty, Jr., of Sheridan, Arkansas, who passed away October 17, 2007, at the age of 76.

Earl Paty, Jr., was a lifelong resident of Grant County where he built a solid foundation of community service that impacted countless lives and will forever be remembered by all who knew him. Whether serving others during his 40-year career at International Paper Co., or through his involvement with numerous local and state organizations, he devoted his lifetime to selflessly giving back to the citizens of Grant County and the State of Arkansas to make the world a better place.

Earl Paty, Jr., was a devout man of faith and a member of Moore's Chapel United Methodist Church. He took great pride in serving the church and congregation on the Administrative Board, as a Sunday School teacher and as a delegate to the Arkansas Annual Conference. He even rose to the level of becoming a certified lay speaker within the United Methodist Church. In addition, he was actively involved with numerous local organizations where he devoted his time and heartfelt energies to others. These included the Grant County Fair Board, the Grant County 4-H Club, the Southeast Arkansas District Development Cooperative and the Sheridan Masonic Lodge.

Perhaps my fondest memories of Earl Paty, Jr., are the many discussions we had over the years about politics, as he well understood how a career in public service could positively affect the lives of thousands. I always admired his fervor for politics which took him up the ladder from chairman of the Grant County Democratic Party to the Executive Director of the Senior Democrats of Arkansas. His contributions to the Democratic Party were recognized in 2003 when he was honored with the distinguished Harold Jinks Democratic Memorial Award. In fact, it was Earl Paty, Jr., who inspired me, through his passion and love of politics and public service, to seek elected office and run for the seat I now hold as U.S. Representative of Arkansas's Fourth Congressional District. For that, I am forever grateful. He was a man I truly looked up to and admired and I am blessed to have been able to call Earl a dear friend.

I send my deepest condolences to his wife of 53 years, Betty Sue Autrey Paty; his children Patricia Knighten, David Paty, and Leslie Tannahill; his two sisters Sue Walker and Faye Welch; and his nine grandchildren, two great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. Earl Paty, Jr., will be greatly missed

in Sheridan, Grant County and throughout the state of Arkansas, and I am truly saddened by this loss.

**FEDERAL RAILROAD SAFETY
IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007**

SPEECH OF

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2095) to amend title 49, United States Code, to prevent railroad fatalities, injuries, and hazardous materials releases, to authorize the Federal Railroad Safety Administration, and for other purposes:

Mr. REYES. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2095 the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2007. This bill, introduced by my colleague Chairman JAMES L. OBERSTAR, provides a long-overdue reauthorization and reorganization of the Federal Railroad Administration. I am proud to count myself as a cosponsor of this legislation.

My district of El Paso has a rich history with the railroad industry. Following the arrival of the railroads in 1881, El Paso experienced enormous economic growth due in part to the railroad connections in the area. Today, my city's connections to the industry persist, and hundreds of my constituents go to work in the rail yards and along the tracks every day. Rail workers and the Americans who live near rail operations deserve the highest level of safety, and the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act provides just that.

Roughly 40 percent of all train accidents are the result of human factors, and, of this startling number, one in four results from fatigue. This bill will set new hours-of-service for our railroad workers and will help ensure they follow proper rest and shift periods. Under the proposed measures, personnel would receive at least 10 hours of rest per 24-hour period and would ultimately be limited to no more than 12 consecutive hours of shift work. The bill would also nearly double the number of rail safety inspection and enforcement staff. These changes would hopefully reduce the number of accidents caused by human error and fatigue and would help ensure safer working conditions for the approximately 1,100 rail workers of El Paso and across the United States.

In addition, H.R. 2095 would reorganize the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and rename it the Federal Railroad Safety Administration (FRSA). Over the 4-year period from 2007 to 2011, the FRSA would authorize \$1.1 billion for general expenses and grant programs. This legislation has taken into account many of the safety investigations and recommendations of the Department of Transportation, especially regarding human fatigue, defective tracks, and railroad crossings. With the reauthorization of this funding, I am confident that great strides will be made to improve the safety of the railroad industry in the United States.

Mr. Chairman, I ask that my colleagues join me in supporting this important legislation so that substantial improvements in Federal railroad safety can be made nationwide.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF J. ROY
GABRIEL

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and dedication of Mr. J. Roy Gabriel, director of labor affairs for the California Farm Bureau Federation and chief operating officer of the Farm Employers Labor Service. Roy passed away suddenly this month in our Nation's Capital while representing the agricultural community on the issues he found most near and dear to his heart. His service and commitment to California agriculture and his passion and joy for life will be sorely missed.

A native of southern California, Roy attended California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo where he earned a degree in Agricultural Business Management and a technical certificate in crops production. Armed with this knowledge and a love for farming, Roy became active in local politics, honing his negotiating skills. In 1973, he joined the California Farm Bureau as a legislative assistant and began his life long commitment to the betterment of agriculture in California. Recognizing Roy's breadth of experience and political prowess, Gov. Pete Wilson appointed Gabriel in 1998 to serve as chief deputy director of the California Department of Industrial Relations.

Roy's involvement with California farming has spanned 30 years. Throughout his lifetime, he has been a tireless voice in support of the valley's immigrant population. In the eighties, Roy helped more than 50,000 workers apply for legal immigration status under the Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Like me, Roy believed the current agriculture labor shortage to be a crisis and fought to bring attention to the issue and enact reform legislation like AgJobs. The agricultural labor reform movement has lost a great champion in his passing.

We also shared a passion for rail transportation. He was not only an avid historian of nineteenth and twentieth century rail development, but he was respected for his knowledge and opinions on the subject matter. Roy was also an active supporter of today's national high speed and inner-city passenger rail efforts. For all these reasons, we will miss him dearly.

Mr. Gabriel's leadership and dedication will continue to inspire Californians for many years to come. A man of great principle and integrity, his passion and enthusiasm has touched many lives, including my own. It is with fond sadness that I remember and honor the life of my colleague and friend, Mr. J. Roy Gabriel.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, unfortunately yesterday, October 22, 2007, I was unable to cast my votes on H.R. 189, H.R. 523, and H. Res. 76.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 983 on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 189,

the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park Act, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 984 on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 523, the Douglas County, Washington, PUD Conveyance Act, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 985 on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 762, Supporting the goals of National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week, I would have voted "aye."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I would like to offer a personal explanation of the reason I missed rollcall vote Nos. 983 through 985 on October 22, 2007. I was in my district attending a family funeral.

If present, I would have voted: rollcall vote No. 983, H.R. 189, establishing the Paterson Great Falls National Park in the state of New Jersey, "nay"; rollcall vote No. 984, H.R. 523, requiring the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain public land located wholly or partially within the boundaries of the Wells Hydroelectric Project of Public Utility District No. 1 of Douglas County, Washington, to the utility district, "aye"; rollcall vote No. 985, H. Res. 762, supporting the goals of National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week, "aye."

IN HONOR OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREATER SPOKANE SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNCIL

HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council (GSSAC) as they celebrate 25 years of service to the Spokane community. In 1982, local policymakers and citizens joined together to take a stand against the devastation of drugs and violence. Through their efforts, GSSAC now runs programs and collaborative efforts that are empowering our youth, focusing on prevention of substance abuse and violence and solving the problem of meth abuse in our community.

At the core of the GSSAC Prevention Center mission is a desire to equip those in need with the knowledge and skills to make positive choices in their life. They work to unite and support the community through fostering positive attitudes and behaviors. Most of all, they encourage, facilitate, initiate and assist all people, groups and organizations in finding solutions to alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse.

Over the 25 years that GSSAC has served the greater Spokane community, they have accomplished many milestones. The staff and volunteers of GSSAC give their time and resources through a variety of programs like the Spokane County Meth Action Team, Wash-

ington Drug-Free Youth and Prevention in Practice. They also help to disseminate information about drug abuse and prevention through their Information Clearing House.

GSSAC has become a model of impact an organization can have when they invest in their community. Through the message of prevention, focusing on education, and reducing the stigma of treatment and recovery, they are teaching others that it truly does take community wide involvement to accomplish goals.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the dedicated staff and volunteers of Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council on 25 years of influential service to our community. I invite my colleagues to join me in commending them for continuing on with their vision to make Spokane a safer place to live, and raising awareness on how we can prevent substance abuse in our communities.

CONGRATULATING ALICE EASON BALLANCE

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, please join me in recognizing and congratulating Alice Eason Ballance of Winsor, North Carolina. Mrs. Ballance was recently named as this year's Experience Works Prime Time Award recipient for North Carolina. This national award program honors individuals over the age of 65 who continue to make meaningful contributions in the workplace, and who best reflect the characteristics of leadership, learning, mentoring and contributing to the nation and their local communities.

Mrs. Ballance is highly deserving of this honor after a lifetime centered on helping others, particularly those who need assistance the most. She continues to work hard each day to help the poor and disadvantaged in eastern North Carolina and has realized many successes along the way.

Mrs. Ballance understood the power of voting and mounted a highly successful voter registration drive where she personally taught people to read to enable them to overcome literacy tests. Among her many accomplishments, she has helped displaced sharecroppers find housing, worked to open the welfare system to anyone who needed assistance, and developed poverty and jobs programs.

She has been recognized many times for her selfless efforts, with honors including the Long Leaf Pine Award from former North Carolina Governor James Hunt, a Community Service Award from former President Bill Clinton and the Nancy Susan Reynolds Award for Extraordinary Leadership.

Today, the 88-year-old Mrs. Ballance still works 9 hours each day as the director of Kiddie World—Mary Alice Day Center overseeing the delivery of daycare services to 150 children and 25 adults. She is an energetic inspiration to all who know her. Mrs. Ballance embodies the true spirit of commitment and compassion; she has given all that she can to her community.

The communities in eastern North Carolina are better for Mrs. Ballance's efforts, so it is a great honor for me to recognize the success

and achievements of this outstanding resident of the First Congressional District of North Carolina.

IN HONOR OF DR. WILLIAM C. POTTER

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. William C. Potter, director of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, CNS, at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, MIIS, for holding the first Nunn-Lugar Chair in Nonproliferation Studies.

The Cooperative Threat Reduction, CTR, Program, commonly referred to as Nunn-Lugar, was created to address the threat against global security resulting from the dissolution of the Soviet Union and loss of control over weapons of mass destruction. Just think what could have happened without Nunn-Lugar—since the program's inception in 1992 nearly 7,000 nuclear warheads and 2,000 missiles have been decommissioned. Nunn-Lugar also provides critical funding for security upgrades and conversion of many former nuclear and biological weapons facilities.

Along with Senators Sam Nunn and RICHARD LUGAR, Dr. Bill Potter has devoted his academic life to nonproliferation issues as the director of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. Under Dr. Potter's leadership, the center is world renowned as a nexus for nonproliferation education, resources, and policy information. For over 9 years, the center has published The Nonproliferation Review, the leading international journal in the field, and other significant publications on various nonproliferation topics by international experts and practitioners. The center nonproliferation databases and website have become known among analysts, government experts, and the media as reliable sources of objective information on cutting-edge policy issues, as well as a broad range of technological and regime-related questions.

Dr. Potter is a global leader on nonproliferation issues. He has authored or edited 14 books and has contributed chapters and articles in over 90 scholarly books and journals. He has served as a consultant to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the RAND Corporation. His present research focuses on nuclear terrorism and on proliferation issues involving post-Soviet states. He is a member of the Pacific Council on International Policy, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the Council on Foreign Relations and served for 5 years on the U.N. Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Research.

Madam Speaker, Dr. Potter's work on nonproliferation and disarming weapons in the former Soviet Union and locating "loose nukes" has contributed significantly to our global security. I can think of no one more worthy of the honor of the first endowed Nunn-Lugar professorship in the world devoted to nonproliferation study than Dr. William C. Potter. It is my honor to consider Dr. Potter a friend.